

happiness does not consist in being all by themselves in any kind of house. But you are right, *Petite Reine*, I am happy. My life has had its drawbacks, many and great, but it has had its blessings, many and great also."

"The friendship of *Monsieur Longworth*, chief among them, I suppose?" says *mademoiselle*, with a speaking shrug.

"The friendship of *Mr. Longworth* chief among them, my dear. You don't like *Mr. Longworth*?"

"I know nothing about him," says *Reine*, a touch of scorn in her tone, "only that you all—all you ladies—seem to pet him, and do him honour, and consult him, and obey him. He is a very great personage in this little town, is he not? Not to know *Monsieur Longworth* is to argue one's self unknown."

"A very great personage?" repeats *Miss Hariott*. "Well, that depends upon your definition of greatness. He is a clever man, a sensible man, a good man. If these qualities constitute greatness then he is great."

"How is he clever? What does he do?"

"Oh! innumerable things. He has written poetry," says *Miss Hariott*, with a repressed smile; "he has written a novel; and both have been hopeless failures, my dear. He delivers most eloquent lectures on occasions, he is editor and proprietor of the principal journal of *Baymouth*, and finally he is, and will continue to be, one of the rising men of the age!"

"A triumphant knight of the goose-quill, in short, in the bloodless realms of pen and ink, without fear and without reproach!"

"*Mademoiselle Reine*, why do you dislike *Mr. Longworth*?"

"*Mees Hariott*, why do you like him? None of these things are any reason why. I think he is a meddler and a busybody—I think he is consulted by people old enough to know their own minds, and I think he impertinently sits and gives advice with a Jove-like loftiness from which there is no appeal. I have read *Dickens*, *madame*, and I think your learned and literary friend has moulded himself upon *Monsieur Pecksniff*. Can you tell me why *Madame*

*Windsor* thinks him first and best of all the men in the world?"

*Miss Hariott* suspends work and looks at her. Some one else stands still and looks, and listens too—an auditor unseen and unbargained for. It is *Longworth*. Finding the garden-gate ajar, as *Reine* left it, he enters and comes close upon them unseen and unheard. If ever the temptation to play eavesdropper was strong to excuse the deed, it is surely strong enough here.

"Let me see myself as others see me for once," he thinks, and coolly stands still and waits for *Miss Hariott's* reply.

"Why?" cries *Reine Landelle*; "tell me if you can, why she, so haughty, so scornful, so imperious, should bow to his flats as though he were a god?"

"Ah! that is it," *Miss Hariott* says to herself. She has ceased work altogether, and stands listening to this sudden outbreak in amazement. "My dear child, do you not know? Have you never heard the name of *George Windsor*?"

"Often. He was *mamma's* brother, and was drowned. I wish he had not been with all my heart."

"Why?"

"Because then we should never have been here. But what of him?"

"*Longworth* is very like him. It is only a chance resemblance, but it is really very striking. And for her dear dead son's sake *Mrs. Windsor* is fond of *Longworth*. My dear, your grandmother may seem a little hard and cold to you, a little too tender to this man, but when you think of the reason you must pity her."

"I do not know that I do. When her son was taken her daughter was left. Does it not strike you that she, not this stranger with the chance resemblance, should have been the comforter?"

"Little *Queen*, if we only look at the right and wrong of things——"

"How else should we look at them? Listen here, *madame*."

The girl sits erect, passionate anger in her voice, passionate fire in her eyes.

"You see us here, my sister and myself. Do you think *Madame Windsor* ever asked us to come? You know better. You know what she was to my mother—cold, loveless, unmotherly, unforgiving to the last. Was she likely, then, to relent to my father's daughters?"